

# Holy Week.



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1. *History*.—As early as the third century we find mention of a more especial observance of the last week of Lent. (St. Denis, Bp. of Alexandria.) St. John Chrysostom, who lived in the fourth century, calls it "The Great Week," not because of a greater number of days, but because of the great mysteries commemorated. It was also called *Hebdomada Poenosa*, The Painful Week, both on account of the sufferings of Christ which were then recalled, and also because of the fatigue consequent upon the celebration of these holy mysteries. The Germans still call it *Charwoche*, the week of sorrows. From the fact that on Maunday Thursday public sinners were reconciled to the church this week was known as "The Week of Indulgence." But it is most commonly called The Holy Week on account of the holiness of the mysteries celebrated.

2. *Observance*.—In the early church Holy Week was distinguished by the increased severity of the fast. St. Epiphanius tells us that some Christians observed a strict fast from Monday morning to the dawn of Easter. Many observed this severe fast for two, three and four days. The general practice was to fast from all food from Maunday Thursday to Easter morning. During these days the faithful passed night vigils in the churches. St. John Chrysostom tells us that on Maunday Thursday after the commemoration of the Last Supper they remained a long time in prayer.

The entire Friday night was spent in prayer in honor of the Burial of our Lord. Saturday night the faithful remained in church assisting at the final preparation of the Catechumens, at their Baptism, and then at the Holy Sacrifice.

The Holy Week was distinguished likewise by an entire cessation from servile labor—an obligation imposed by the civil as well as the ecclesiastical law. The people, weakened by the long and arduous Lenten Fast, needed all their remaining strength for the celebration of the Divine Offices and for prayer in commemoration of the sufferings of Christ.

By a decree of Theodosius, A. D. 389, all law business and all pleadings were forbidden during the seven days preceding and the seven days following Easter. The only exception made was for the legal process necessary in emancipating slaves. The Church obliged Christian masters to give their slaves entire rest from labor during this fortnight.

In remembrance of the goodness of God in pardoning the sins of the world, Christian Princes during Holy Week released all prisoners except those who would be dangerous to the community. St. Leo commenting on this practice exhorts Christian people to emulate this clemency of their rulers and to forgive one another their private wrongs. We learn from the *Capitularies* of Charlemagne, that Bishops had the right to exact of Judges for the love of Jesus Christ, the release of prisoners. If their demand were refused they could deny admission to the church to the one refusing. As late as the past century the Parliament of Paris on Tuesday of Holy Week, used to go to the Palace prisons and discharge all prisoners whose case seemed favorable or who were not guilty

of some capital offence. From the pervading thought of the justice and mercy of God during this holy season, these days were called the Reign of Christ.

Finally people during this Holy Week increased their almsgiving and other works of mercy.

4. *Liturgy*.—In the ceremonies of the Holy Week the Church keeps in view three objects : the Passion of her Lord, the final Preparation of Catechumens for Baptism, and the Reconciliation of Public sinners. Hence throughout the entire liturgy of this season we find the expression of the grief of the Church at the death of her Spouse. Everywhere are most touching allusions to the Passion. The *Glory be to the Father* is hushed on Passion Sunday : the vestments are expressive of her mourning save when on Maunday Thursday for a little while she allows white to be used to express her joy that her Lord has left her a memorial of Himself in the Blessed Sacrament. The crucifixes are veiled to signify the humiliation experienced by our Savior when forced, to hide from the Jews, to escape untimely death. (Gospel : Passion Sunday.) The images of Saints are likewise covered ; because they should not be seen when the glory of the Master is eclipsed. The resources of art are exhausted in presenting a dramatic representation of the Lord's Passion during this week : for this her impressive Cathedrals were built with broad aisles and immense sanctuaries ; at her altars are magnificent groupings of ministers clad in rich though sombre vestments, as though devised with the skill of a sculptor and the fine sense of coloring of a master painter ; the music throughout is solemn, impressive, harmonious ; in the chanting of the Passion, dramatic ; plaintive in the *Lamentations* during Tenebrae ; penitential

and awe-inspiring in the *Miserere*; sad and reproachful in the *Impropria*; while the subdued sorrow of the Processional Hymns, *Pange lingua* and *Vexilla Regis* heighten by contrast the magnificent burst of triumph in the *Exultet* and the entire Mass of Easter.

To those who desire to enter more fully into the sentiments of the Church during Holy week, we recommend a careful reading of "Ceremonies of Holy Week," by Cardinal Wiseman; "Explanation of the Ceremonies of Holy Week," by Bishop England, (Works Vol. iii, p. 350, ed. 1849); "Passiontide and Holy Week," by Guéranger.

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# Palm Sunday.

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The Mortifications of Lent have brought our minds into sympathy with the penitential spirit of the church, and the gloom growing more and more intense during Passion Week has prepared our hearts so that putting away all worldliness as Moses put off the shoes from his feet we might stand in the holy place of our Lord's Passion. To-day we enter at last upon the closing scenes of His life. Palm Sunday is named from the palm or olive branches, or where these are not obtainable, the branches of other trees, which are solemnly blessed and distributed and held in the hand in remembrance of what the Jews did when our Saviour made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. It is also called Hosanna Sunday from the opening antiphon. Formerly it was called *Pascha Floridum*, because Easter is as it were in bud. The Spaniards having on this day discovered the Peninsula in the Gulf of Mexico called it Florida in honor of the Feast.

The ceremonies are divided into three parts: the blessing of the Palms; the Procession; the Mass.

*The Blessing of the Palms.*—In Cathedral churches the Bishop having vested at the throne in purple cope and mitre sits and reads the antiphon *Hosanna* which is sung by the choir. This antiphon and the prayer said by the Bishop immediately afterward; ex-

presses the object and character of the day's function, viz., the joyful celebration of Christ's entry as King and the sorrowful commemoration of His Passion. The Sub-Deacon then reads a lesson from Exodus in which, with an appropriate and consequently beautiful analogy to the festival, God, after Israel had rested beneath the palm-trees of Elim, promises complete redemption from the Egyptian bondage with the evidence thereof in the *Manna*. The choir sings a Responsory narrating dramatically and antithetically first, the assembly of the Jewish Priests deliberating whether they should destroy Jesus; and, then, the prayers and monitions of Jesus in the Agony. The Deacon finally chants a Gospel which explains the ceremonies, recounting the triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem. The Bishop, then, standing at the throne and surrounded by his ministers, sings a prayer in which two scriptural allusions are made—one to Noah who received an olive branch after the waters had subsided; the other to Moses whose people after leaving Egypt camped under the seventy palm trees. In the solemn tone of the Preface he describes how the whole creation, creatures, saints and angels, praise the great name of the only begotten Son. The five prayers which follow explain the mystery of the Palms, and draw down the blessing of God upon them and upon the faithful who receive and keep them with proper dispositions (see Holy Week Book.) These prayers like all the prayers in the church offices, "possess an elevation of sentiment, a beauty of allusion, a force of expression, and a depth of feeling, which no modern form of supplication ever exhibits." (Wiseman Lect. II. p. 64.) The Bishop sprinkles the palms with Holy Water, thurifies them and distributes them to the clergy, the choir meanwhile singing two antiphons that recall the enthusiasm of the little children of Jerusalem, who, with their Palms in their hands sang their loud *Hosanna to the Son of David*. (Guéranger : Liturgical Year). Then the Bishop prays

that we may imitate the innocence and deserve to partake of the merits of those who thus praised our Lord Jesus Christ.

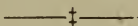
2. *The Procession.* The Bishop having blessed the Incense, which is carried at the head of processions to shed its perfume along the path—the Deacon cries aloud: *Let us proceed in Peace*; the choir answering: *In the name of Christ, Amen!* The procession then advances, clergy and faithful carrying their palms in the hand, for, with the Jews, to hold a branch in one's hand, was a sign of joy. (Lev. xxiii, 40.)

After the thurifer comes a cross bearer: then the purple robed acolytes and choristers, then the clergy followed by a sub-deacon bearing the Archiepiscopal cross, finally surrounded by his ministers the Archbishop carrying the Palm in the left hand and blessing the people continually with the right. The Choristers are chanting antiphons in honor of Jesus, the king of Israel, "which beginning with the account of our Savior's sending two disciples to Bethania, to procure the humble ass on which he was to ride, describes that procession in a series of strophes, which increase in beauty till they reach a sentiment perfectly lyrical and exclaim: "In faith be we united with the angels and those children crying out to the triumph over death" Hosanna in the highest!" (Wiseman.) The procession leaves the Cathedral and on its return finds the door closed—heaven's gates barred against fallen man. Voices within, representing the angels in heaven greeting the entry of Jesus into the Eternal Jerusalem, sing the praises of Christ in the beautiful hymn *Gloria Laus*. The choir without, representing man celebrating the entry of the Son of David into the earthly Jerusalem, repeats the strain of praise. After six verses of this immortal hymn of the Prisoner-Bishop, Theodulph, have been thus chanted, the Sub-Deacon strikes with the cross the door, which immediately opens and the procession enters—as Jesus opened for us by His Cross the gates of the

heavenly Jerusalem. With joyful chant the procession returns to the sanctuary where the palms are laid aside and the Bishop resumes his *cappa magna*, and mass is begun. The blessing of Palms and carrying them in procession is of highest antiquity, (see Wiseman ib. pp. 128 & 129, Guéranger.)

3. The Mass contains nothing unusual—all traces of the joy of the preceding ceremony have disappeared save only that during the singing of the Passion the Palms the emblems of victory are carried in the hands as a protest against the indignities offered to Jesus by his enemies. In Cathedral churches the Passion is sung by three Priests clad as Deacons, one representing the narrator, a second, the persons who appear in the narrative, and the third representing our Saviour. For a more extended description of this dramatic chant, see the paper on “The Tenebrae.”

# Tenebrae.



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That portion of the Divine office which is called Matins and Lauds is chanted publicly and with great solemnity on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday in Holy Week. This service is called the Tenebrae from the Latin word "darkness," because this office was formerly celebrated during the night, and even when the hour was anticipated the name of Tenebrae was kept because although it began with daylight, it ended after the sun had set. It may be too that this office points to the times when the Christians lived in persecution and concealment and consequently selected the night as the fittest time for the celebration of their sacred rites.

For many centuries this office continued to be performed at midnight, but that practice is kept up only in monasteries and convents of strictest observance. Each of its divisions is styled a nocturn or nightly prayer. It differs in very many particulars from the office of Matins as usually recited by the clergy throughout the year. Everything is expressive of the grief pressing upon Mother Church. All formulas of joy and hope wherewith on all other days she began to praise God are omitted. The "*Domine labia mea aperies* (*Oh Lord thou shalt open my lips*), and the *Deus in adjutorium meum intende* (*incline*

unto my aid, Oh God), the *Gloria Patri* at the end of the psalms, the canticles and responsories are all taken away, and nothing left but what is essential to the form of the divine office; psalms, lessons and chants expressive of grief. Each canonical hour ends with the psalm *Miserere*, and with the commemoration of the Passion and Death of Our Saviour. No blessing is asked on the lessons. The celebrant lowers his voice towards the termination of the prayers, and no "*Amen*" is said by the people.

The most striking feature of this singular office is the large triangular candlestick placed at the Epistle side of the Altar. At the apex of this triangle is a white candle with seven yellow candles on either side. At the end of each psalm or canticle one of these fifteen candles is extinguished, but the one at the apex remains lighted. During the Benedictus the six candles on the Altar are also put out. Then the sole remaining lighted candle is taken and hidden behind the Altar during the recitation of the "*Miserere*" and the prayer. At the conclusion of the prayer a slight noise being made, the candle is brought from behind the Altar, and remains burning even after Tenebrae is over.

The origin of this practice is hidden in obscurity. No doubt during the nightly celebrations of the Divine Office, necessity as well as choice compelled the use of lights, but the faithful so arranged them as to make them strikingly significant. The number of lights differed. One writer tells us that in his time the Church was lighted up with twenty-four candles which were gradually extinguished to show how the Sun of Justice had set.

Another writer tells us that in some Churches all the candles were extinguished at once, in several by a hand made of wax to represent that of Judas; in others they were all quenched by a moist sponge passed over them to show the death of Christ, and on the next day fire was struck from a flint by which



they were again kindled to show that He had risen again.

Some writers inform us that all the lower lights were emblematic of the Apostles and other disciples of the Saviour who at the period that his sufferings grew to their crisis, became terrified at His arrest, His humiliations, His condemnation and crucifixion, as well as by the supernatural exhibitions upon Calvary and in Jerusalem and that the extinction shows the terror and doubts by which they were overwhelmed; but that the Blessed Virgin who is represented by the candle upon the summit and which is not extinguished, alone retained all her confidence unshaken, and with a clear and perfect expectation of His Resurrection, yet plunged in grief, beheld the appalling spectres that came as from another world to bear testimony of a deicide. But the most instructive explanation appears that which informs us that the candles which are arranged along the sides of this triangle, represent the patriarchs and prophets who under the Law of Nature and the written Law gave the world that imperfect revelation which they received, but all tending towards one point which was Christ the Messias, who as the Orient on High was to shed the beams of knowledge upon those minds that had been so long enveloped in darkness. as these lights are extinguished, one at the end of each psalm, so were these chosen ones, after having proclaimed the praises of the Redeemer, consigned to death, many of them by the people whom they instructed. (Bishop England's Works; Vol. III, p. 365.)

The noise made at the conclusion of the service reminds us of the convulsions of nature at the Saviour's death, and the production of the light still burning and shedding its light abroad, recalls the Resurrection of the Saviour, and His effulgence on the world.

The principal features of the Office are the Lamentations of the prophet Jeremias, in which under the

name of the daughter of Sion, he bewails the desolation of that Jerusalem over which Jesus Christ wept.

The first lamentations, usually performed on Wednesday and Friday evenings, were harmonized by Palestrina, and that of Thursday by Allegri. Little or no attempt is made to render the varied expression of each passage, but they take their tone from the character of the entire piece, and produce an unmingled feeling of devotion. The other musical features of this office are the "*Miserere*" and the "*Benedictus*." The grandest of these compositions are performed at the services on Good Friday, when the "*Benedictus*" from the Sixtine Chapel collection and the "*Miserere*" by Allegri are generally performed. We append Cardinal Wiseman's magnificent description of Bainsi Allegri's *Miserere*.

"Every verse is varied, and betrays art. At the words *et exultabunt ossa humiliata*, there is air or rather time, upon the first part of the verse, in a rising joyful movement, succeeded by a low, deep and sepulchral expression in the rest of the phrase. The verse *Incerta et occulta sapientiae tuae manifestasti mihi*, begins with a soft, stealthy expression, to convey the idea of concealment and uncertainty; then at the *manifestasti*, "Thou hast declared," part succeeds to part, till a grand burst of full declaration is made. Every verse proceeds upon the same principle, and the mind is thus kept undecided between different feelings, watching the art and skill of the composer,—now held in suspense, and heaving upwards on a majestic swell, then falling suddenly, by its breaking, as a wave, on an abrupt and shortened cadence; and you arrive at the conclusion with a variety of images and feelings,—the mind, like a shivered mirror, retaining only fragments of sentiments and emotions. How different is the effect of Allegri's, upon the soul of one, who, kneeling in that silent twilight, and shutting up every sense, save that of hearing, allows himself to be borne



unresisting by the uniformly directed tide of its harmonies! It is a chaunt but twice varied: one verse being in four parts, and another in five, till both unite in the final swell of nine voices. The written notes are simple and unadorned; but tradition, under the guidance of long experience and of chastened taste has interwoven many turns, dissonances, and resolutions, which no written or published score has expressed. At first, the voices enter in full but peculiar harmony, softly swelling in emphasis on each word, till the middle of the verse, when a gradual separation of each part takes place, preparing for the first close; you hear them, as though weaving among themselves a rich texture of harmonious combination; one seems struggling against the general resolve, and refusing more than a momentary contact with one another, but edging off upon delicious dissonances, till the whole, with a waving successive modulation, meet in full harmony upon a suspended cadence. Then they proceed with the second portion of the verse, upon a different, but even richer accord, till once more they divide with greater beauty than before. The parts seem to become more entangled than ever. Here you trace one winding and creeping, by soft and subdued steps, through the labyrinth of sweet sounds; then another drops, with delicious trickling falls, from the highest compass to the level of the rest; then one seems at length to extricate itself; then another, in imitative successive cadences; they seem as silver threads that gradually unravel themselves, and then wind round the fine deep-toned bass which has scarcely swerved from its steady dignity during all their modulations, and filling up the magnificent diapason, burst into a swelling final cadence, which has no name upon earth.

After verse has thus succeeded to verse, ever deepening the impression once made, without an artifice or an embellishment to mar the singleness of the influence, after the union of the two choirs has

made the last burst, of condensed, but still harmonious power ; and that affecting prayer, " Look down, o Lord upon this thy family," has been recited in melancholy monotony amidst the scarcely expired echoes of that eachanting, overpowering heavenly strain, the mind remains in a state of subdued tenderness and solemnity of feeling, which can ill brook the jarring sounds of earth, and which make it sigh after the reign of true and perfect harmony."

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## The Singing of the Passion.

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The singing of the Passion is in reality a dramatic representation. The narrative is given by a strong, manly tenor voice. The words of Our Saviour are in a deep, solemn bass, and whatever is spoken by any other person is given in a high contralto. Each part has its particular cadence of old, simple, but rich chant suited to the character represented. That of the narrator is clear, distinct and slightly modulated, and that in which ordinary interlocutors speak, sprightly, bordering upon colloquial familiarity ; but that in which Our Saviour's words are uttered is slow, grave and most solemn, beginning low and ascending by full tones, then gently varied in rich though simple undulations, till it ends by a graceful and expressive cadence, modified with still greater effect in interrogatory phrases. The magnificence of this dramatic recitation consists in the choruses, for whenever the Jewish crowd are made to speak in the history of the Passion, or indeed whenever any number of individuals interfere, the choir bursts in with its simple but massive harmony, and expresses the sentiment with a truth and energy which thrills through the frame and

overpowers the feelings. There are twenty-one choruses in the Gospel of Palm Sunday, and only fourteen in that of Friday. The phrases in the first are longer and more capable of varied expression than in the latter. When the Jews cried out "Crucify Him" or "Barabbas" The music like the words is concentrated with rightful energy, and consists of just as many notes as syllables. Yet in the three notes of the last word a passage of key is effected simple as it is striking. The effect is rendered far more powerful by a most abrupt termination. The entire harmony is given in a quick but marked, so to speak stamping way, well suiting the tumultuous outcries of a fierce mob. In the three choruses of St. Matthew's Passion where the two false witnesses speak, there is a duet between soprano and contralto, and the words are made to follow one another in a stumbling way, as though one always took up his story from the other, and the music is in a syncopated style; one part either jarring with or clearly imitating the others movements, so that it most aptly represents the judgment that "their testimony was not agreeing." In the 16th nothing could succeed the soft and moving tone in which the words "Hail King of the Jews" are uttered. They powerfully draw the soul to utter in earnest what was intended in blasphemy. The 17th and 18th are masterpieces.

The 10th of St. John's Gospel is most exquisite in modulation: "If you let him go you are no friend of Ceasar's." The most beautiful and pathetic in all the collection is the last chorus, "Let us not divide it, but cast lots." They succeed one another in a following cadence, growing softer and softer and almost dying away, till the entire chorus swells in a mildened but majestic burst. As the catastrophe approaches the strong voice in which the historical recitation is delivered softens gradually, being reduced almost to a whisper as the last words upon the Cross are related, and die away as the last breath of our Saviour's life is yielded up. • All fall upon their knees, and a

deep silence of some moments is observed and necessarily felt. Formerly the history of the Passion was chanted in Greek as well as in Latin. The last five verses are sung by the Deacon in the usual Gospel tone. After having received the blessing and incensed the book but without having lights or incense, for it is a joyless recital. [Adapted.]



# Maundy Thursday.

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Thursday of Holy Week is called Maundy Thursday from the "mandatum" or precept, the first word of the antiphon, "A new commandment I give you," which is sung while the feet of certain poor men are washed, as directed in the office of the day. It is the first day of the Azymes, or Feast of the Unleavened Bread, when with the Jews of old, the pasch should be eaten at sunset. It commemorates the institution of the Blessed Sacrament at the Last Supper or pasch eaten by Jesus with his Apostles. There are four distinct parts in the ceremonies of to-day. The first is the reconciliation of penitence, which is no longer in use, although a vestige of it remains in the ancient custom scrupulously observed at Rome, when on the afternoons of Wednesday and Thursday, the Cardinal-Pœnitentiary proceeds in state to the Basilica of Sancta Maria Maggiore and St. Peter, and seated on a tribunal reserved for that purpose, receives the confession or other application of such as may wish to advise with him and obtain spiritual relief in matters reserved to his jurisdiction. [Cardinal Wiseman. Lecture 3d, p. 118]

Three solemn masses were formerly celebrated on this day, and before the first the public absolution of the public penitents was held. [An interesting de-

scription of the ritual followed in the reconciliation of penitents will be found in Guéranger, p. 352, Holy Week.]

## SECOND, THE MASS.

As the Church commemorates on this day the institution of the Eucharist, she allows some joy and gratitude to mingle with her heavy grief. Naturally the mass is the part in which this joy predominates. Though her pictures and images and crucifixes are still veiled, yet the Cross is covered with white, the Altar is decorated, and the candles are of white wax. In Cathedral Churches, the Bishop always pontificates on Holy Thursday, and during the mass blesses the Holy Oils, a function which we will describe later. The mass proceeds as usual, even the psalm "*Judica*" being re-admitted for this day. The Gloria in Excelsis is once more sung, and while the hymn is being said at the Altar all the bells in the Church are rung, and a magnificent voluntary is performed on the organs, after which both bell and organ are silent until the same glorious hymn is re-intoned on Holy Saturday. On this day the kiss of peace is not given after the Agnus Dei, because it was by a kiss that Judas betrayed his Lord. At the mass the bishop consecrates two sacred hosts, one to be consumed as usual, and the other to be reserved at another Altar with the greatest reverence, until brought back the next day, Good Friday, to be consumed at the office of that day.

The feature of the mass is the procession of the Blessed Sacrament when the host that has been consecrated for the mass of the pre-sanctified is carried in solemn state. The celebrant, surrounded by his ministers, preceded by the cross-bearer and acolytes and two thurifers swinging their thuribles, and all the clergy and choristers proceed down the broad aisle and around the Cathedral to an Altar in one of the chapels, which has been magnificently decorated with flowers and rich hangings. During the procession the



choir sings the well-known hymn of the Blessed Sacrament, "Pange Lingua." When the chapel is reached the bishop places the chalice containing the host upon the Altar and incenses the sacred host. The deacon then replaces it in the tabernacle prepared, and after a short prayer in silence, the procession returns to the sanctuary, and Vespers are immediately begun. This office, which on Sundays and Feast days, is recited with so much solemnity is on Thursday and Friday deprived of everything that betokens joy. Instead of the magnificent Gregorian chant, the psalms have not even inflection. The Church, as a disconsolate spouse, mourns the loss of Jesus. The psalms of the Vespers are chosen to commemorate the Passion of Our Lord. After the Vespers, the bishop accompanied by his ministers goes to the Altar and removes all cloths and ornaments, signifying the suspension of the Holy Sacrifice. In Rome, the canons and other functionaries of St. Peter's, after the office of Tenebrae wash the High Altar with wine and water in commemoration of that act of humility by which Our Redeemer washed His disciples' feet. The 21st Psalm with its antiphon "They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they cast lots," gives the key to the meaning of this ceremony of stripping the Altars, because Jesus is in the hands of His enemies, the Jews, who are about to strip Him of His garments. All the other Altars of the Church are likewise denuded, and an air of desolation is about the Temple of God. The tabernacle is left open to show that its Divine Guest has departed. In many Catholic countries and especially at Rome, the custom of washing the feet of twelve poor men is yet observed in commemoration of the humility of Our Lord in washing the feet of His disciples. In the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, we have a beautiful record of her manner of observing this day. [See Montalembert's *Life*, p. 67.]

It is the custom among Catholics to visit the churches in their vicinity where the Blessed Sacra-

ment is reposing. This visitation is highly meritorious, but should be practised with great devotion and recollection.

#### BLESSING OF THE HOLY OILS.

The second mass which used formerly to be said on Maundy Thursday was that of the blessing of the holy oils. This ceremony, of course, can be witnessed only in cathedral churches, because it is only a bishop that can consecrate the holy oils used in the administration of the sacraments. The reason of the selection of Maundy Thursday as the day for the blessing of the holy oils, was, that these would be much needed for the baptism of the catechumens on Easter eve. There are three holy oils. The first is called "The Oil of the Sick," which is the matter of the sacrament of Extreme Unction. Formerly it used to be blessed on any day of the year, or as often as required, but later on the blessing of the three oils was united in one. The noblest of the three oils is the Sacred Chrism, and its consecration is more important and fuller of mystery than those of the other two ; for it is by the Chrism that the Holy Ghost imprints his indelible seal on the Christian, strengthens him, and gives a visible sign of his membership with Christ, whose name signifies "unction." The child just baptized receives the unction of this oil, in order to show that he partakes of the kingly character of the great King. Balm is mixed with the Chrism to represent THE GOOD ODOR OF CHRIST. [I Corinthians, ii. 15.]

In the Eastern Church thirty-three different kinds of precious perfumes are put into the oil, and it thus becomes an ointment of exquisite fragrance. [Guéranger.]

The Sacred Chrism is used by the Church in the consecration of bishops, the blessing of bells, dedication of a church, the consecration of chalice and altars. In the dedication of a church the bishop pours out



the Chrism on twelve crosses, which are to attest to succeeding ages the glory of God's house.

The third of the holy oils is the Oil of Catechumens, which is of apostolic institution, and is used in the ceremonies of Baptism, for the anointing of the breast and shoulders. It is also used for anointing a priest's hands in ordination, and for the coronation of a king or queen. These oils being therefore so important, are consecrated with the greatest solemnity. On no occasion does the Church use so much pomp and splendor as in this blessing. Twelve priests assist as witnesses and co-operators of the Holy Chrism. Seven deacons and seven sub-deacons assist to carry the oils and to guard them. In the Cathedral of New York a special set of magnificent vestments is used on this day. The vestments are of the richest silk, beautifully and artistically embroidered by hand, each chasuble and dalmatic and tunic bearing a different device, skillfully wrought, the designs being in complete harmony, from the mitre of the archbishop through all the pieces of the pontifical vestments down to the maniple of the last sub-deacon. This magnificent set of vestments is the gift to the Cathedral of Archbishop Corrigan.

The mass proceeds as far as the prayer of the canon immediately preceding the *Pater noster*. The Bishop then leaves the altar and goes to the Epistle side of the sanctuary, where a table has been splendidly fitted up for the blessing. A procession of acolytes, cross-bearer and thurifer, with the twelve priests, the seven deacons and the seven sub-deacons, go to the sacristy where the ampulla are prepared. The sub-deacon takes the one containing the Oil of the Sick. In solemn procession the holy oil is brought before the Bishop, the priests and deacons chanting meanwhile the beautiful hymn of St. Fortunatus. The Bishop then blesses the Oil of the Sick, prefacing the blessing by an exorcism, in order to drive away the influence

## MAUNDY THURSDAY.

of the evil ones, who, out of hatred for man, do infest the creatures given to us for our use.

After the oil is blessed, the Bishop returns to the altar, and proceeds with the mass until after the Communion, when he returns to the place prepared for the blessing of the oils. The twelve priests, seven deacons and seven sub-deacons, again repair to the sacristy, bringing out in solemn procession the Oil of Chrism and the Oil of Catechumens, which are carried by two deacons, while a sub-deacon carries the vessel containing the balm. The Bishop begins by blessing this latter, calling it "the fragrant tear of dry bark, the oozing of a favored branch that gives us the priestly unction." Before proceeding with the blessing of the Oil of the Chrism, he thrice breathes upon it in the form of a cross, the twelve priests doing the same, in imitation of our Blessed Saviour breathing upon His Apostles, and conferring the power of the Holy Ghost, who is the spirit or breath. After an exorcism, the Bishop sings the praises of the Chrism in a magnificent preface, coming down from the earliest ages. The balm is then mixed with the Chrism, whereupon the Bishop salutes the holy oil with these words: "Hail, O Holy Chrism," thus honoring the Holy Ghost, who is to work by means of this Sacrament. Each of the twelve priests, making three profound inclinations, pays the Holy Ghost the same honor. The Bishop then blesses the Oil of Catechumens, after which he again salutes the oil, saying: "Hail, O Holy Oil," being followed in this act of reverence by each of the priests. The procession again forms, and carries the sacred oils to the sacristy.

# Good Friday.

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On Good Friday the grief of the Church is so deep that she forbids the offering of the salutary sacrifice, consequently there is no Mass in the services of to-day. The Church presents an appearance of sorrow and penance. The Altar is stripped of its ornaments ; the Sanctuary is draped in black ; the benches are uncovered ; the candles are yellow. No salutes are given in the Sanctuary. The service consists of four parts : first the Lessons and the Passion ; secondly, the Prayers ; thirdly, the Veneration of the Cross ; lastly, the Mass of the Pre-Sanctified.

*I. The Lessons and the Passion.*—The procession enters the Sanctuary, the celebrant and his ministers being vested in black. No lights, nor incense are carried. The ministers go to the foot of the Altar and prostrate themselves, praying in silence while the acolytes cover the Altar with a single cloth instead of the three which are always required when Mass is celebrated. The celebrant and ministers then rise, and the lessons are begun. A chanter sings a lesson from Osee in which the Lord invites the people to repentance and mercy, promises to receive them to mercy when they come with suitable dispositions, and intimates that the mosaic rites and sacrifices were valueless except so far as they were connected with that of Christ.' The tract that follows relates to the Passion and foretells the second coming of Christ. Then follows a prayer reminding the Father of his justice towards Judas and his mercy towards the good thief and begging that every remnant of sin may be removed from us that we may rise again with Our Lord Jesus Christ. The sub-deacon reads a lesson from the book of Exodus, describing the institution of the Passover, a figure of the death of the Redeemer.

A tract composed of several passages taken from

the 139th psalm, prophetic of the Passion and representing Our Redeemer praying to His Eternal Father, is then sung by the choir.

Three priests clad as deacons, but without dalmatics enter the Sanctuary to sing the dramatic recitation of the Passion, which is the history of the sufferings of the Saviour as recorded in the Gospel of St. John, the only Evangelist present at the awful scenes, and therefore giving testimony as an eye witness. For a description of the chant of this Passion, see the paper on "Tenebræ." At the conclusion the deacon sings a few verses, but without asking the blessing or having lights or incense.

It is usual for a sermon to be preached on the Passion on Good Friday. After the sermon follow the prayers.

*II. The Prayers.*—The Church following the example set her by the one Mediator of the world in his Passion, prays for all mankind, for all classes and persons, as Christ dying on the Cross offered up to his Eternal Father for all mankind prayers and supplications with a strong cry and tears. [Heb. V., 7.]

Each of these prayers is introduced by a few words which shows its object. The deacon bids the faithful kneel down, and the sub-deacon tells them to rise and unite in the prayers made by the priest who prays for all orders and degrees, for the whole Church; for the Holy Father, its visible head; for all bishops, priests, deacons and other clergy, for confessors, virgins, widows and all other congregated portions of the faithful; for temporal sovereigns; for catechumens; for the removal of error, of disease and famine; to entreat the liberation of captives; safe return of travellers; health for the sick; the safe arrival of all those who are upon the ocean; for the grace of conversion; for heretics, schismatics, for Jews also, that on this day of mercy, the blood which their fathers desired might be upon them and their children, might indeed come upon the descendants in streams

of expiation and not in rills of burning. Here the deacon does not invite the faithful to kneel. The Church has no hesitation in offering up a prayer for the descendants of Jesus's executioners, but in doing so she refrains from genuflecting, because this mark of adoration was turned by the Jews into an insult against Our Lord during the Passion. She prays for his scoffers, but she shrinks from repeating the act wherewith they scoffed at Him. [Guéranger.]

Finally a prayer is offered for the Pagans who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

*III. The Veneration of the Cross.*—After embracing the whole universe in her charity, the Church invites her children to an act of solemn reparation, the veneration of that Cross upon which the Most Precious Blood was poured forth. This holy ceremony was instituted at Jerusalem in the fourth century. Cardinal Wiseman says. "We have in this instance a ceremonial expressive of the triumph of Christianity, of the exaltation of its sacred emblem above every other badge, a proclamation of the principle that through it alone salvation was wrought, the vindication of it from ignominy and hatred which for three centuries has been its lot and the paying of a public debt of honor, tribute, love and veneration to Him who hung upon it in reparation of the blasphemy, and, in his disciples, persecution, wherewith he had been visited." The celebrant takes off the chasuble, the badge of his priesthood, in order that the reparation which he is the first to offer to the outraged Christ, may be made with all possible humility. Standing on the step near the Epistle side of the Altar with his face turned toward the people, he receives the cross from the deacon, and unveiling the upper part as far as the arms, he raises it and sings the words—"*Ecce Lignum Crucis*" *Behold the wood of the Cross!* Then joined by the deacon and sub-deacon he continues "*on which hung the salvation of the world!*" the people kneeling down and venerating the Cross



while the choir sings these words "*Venite adoremus*," *come let us adore*. The first exposition, in a low tone of voice, represents the fear of the Apostles when first preaching the Cross not daring to speak of the great mystery. except to the few faithful disciples of Jesus. For the same reason the priest only slightly raises the Cross. This homage is intended as a reparation for the insults and injuries offered to Christ in the house of Caiphas. A second time the celebrant holds up the holy sign of our redemption higher than the first and sings in a higher note "*Ecce lignum crucis*," the deacon and sub-deacon joining in as before; the people again falling upon their knees, and the choir again singing *Venite Adoremus*. This second elevation signifies the Apostles extending their preaching after the descent of the Holy Ghost, and is intended as a reparation for the treatment received by Our Saviour in the Court of Pilate. The priest finally advances to the middle of the Altar, and removes the veil entirely from the Cross, elevating it more than at the two preceding times, and singing triumphantly on a still higher note "*Ecce lignum crucis*." The deacon and sub-deacon again uniting their voices with his, and the people falling upon their knees, while the choir sings *Venite Adoremus*. This third and unreserved manifestation represents the mystery of the Cross preached to the whole earth, and is intended as a reparation to Our Lord for the outrages of Calvary. The celebrant and the ministers having removed their shoes, advance successively towards the place where the crucifix has been laid, making three genuflections at intervals, and finally kissing the Cross. The clergy follow in due order. The chants used during this ceremony are most beautiful as well as most ancient. They are called "The reproaches," and at the end of each reproach, the *Irisagion* is sung in Latin and in Greek "*Holy God, Holy Strong One, Holy Immortal have mercy on us!*" Towards the end of the veneration of the Cross, the candles are lighted and the deacon spreads a corporal upon the Altar upon

which the Blessed Sacrament is to be placed. Then follows the procession to the chapel in which the Host consecrated the day before has been kept. The deacon takes the chalice which contains the host and places it upon the Altar. The priest having adored the Blessed Sacrament, takes the chalice and proceeds in solemn procession to the High Altar. During the procession the triumphant hymn of the Cross "*Vexilla regis*" is sung. Then begins a broken and disordered service called

*IV. The Mass of the Pre-Sanctified.*—The priest receives the Sacred Host upon the paten while the deacon pours wine and water into the chalice. The offerings and the Altar are incensed as usual but to express the grief of the Church the celebrant is not incensed. He washes his hands, praying in secret, says the *Orate fratres*, the answer *suscipiat* being omitted, and then immediately in ferial tone sings the *Pater Noster*. Then he says aloud the prayer "*Libera nos*" which in every other Mass is said secretly. Before communicating himself, the priest invites the faithful to adore the Sacred Host. He raises it on high as Jesus was raised on the cross. Then he divides it into three parts, one of which he puts into the chalice, thus sanctifying the wine and water which he is to take after his communion, but without consecrating these elements. They receive a very special benediction similar to that which is attached to the garments worn by Our Saviour. After his communion he receives the particle with the wine and water, and washes his fingers saying in secret the prayer "*Quod ore sumpsimus*," thus terminating the Mass of the Pre-Sanctified.

The Vespers are said with the same mournful plainness as on Thursday, and during the day the faithful assemble to venerate the cross. In many churches the devotion of The Three Hours Agony is observed. During the services a short sermon is preached on each of the seven words of our Lord on the cross.

# Holy Saturday.

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To understand the services of Holy Saturday it is necessary to recall the fact that for nearly a thousand years the discipline of the Latin Church forbade the offering of the sacrifice of the Mass on Holy Saturday as well as on Good Friday, in remembrance of the time when the body of Our Lord lay lifeless in the tomb. The offices which are celebrated on Holy Saturday morning were then performed during the night preceding Easter Sunday. With the relaxations in fasting came the anticipation of these offices, and about the 11th century the Mass was said on Holy Saturday instead of during the night. The object of the whole services on Holy Saturday is the baptism of the Catechumens, and all the ceremonies converge towards this centre.

The office comprises, first, the blessing of the New Fire and the incense; second, the blessing of the Paschal candle; third, the prophecies; fourth, the blessing of the Font; fifth, the Litanies; sixth, the Mass terminating with the Vespers.

## *The Blessing of the New Fire and Incense.*

The lights having been all extinguished in the ceremonies at the preceding day, it is necessary to procure the means of again illuminating the desolate temple. Various means are adopted to this end. In some Churches the white candle of the Tenebrae was kept for the purpose of renewing the other lights; in others three large lamps were concealed, emblematic of the three



days of the entombment, and other lamps were renewed from these as a symbol of the Resurrection. In other Churches light was produced by means of a burning-glass from the sun, as signifying the Orient on high; or were struck from a flint, typifying the rock, which is Christ. (I. Cor. X, 4.)

In Florence the fire is struck from flints brought from the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem in the time of the Crusades. In some Churches the New Fire was blessed on each of the three days, and the Roman Church was one of the last to adopt the ceremony of a special blessing for Saturday. Five grains of incense are also blessed for the purpose of being put into the Paschal Candle. The New Fire represents Christ the Light of the World, and the spark struck from the flint represents Our Lord rising from the Sepulchre through the stone that had been rolled against it. The putting out of all the lights in the Church symbolizes the abrogation of the old law, and the new fire represents the preaching of the New, whereby the Light of the World fulfilled all the figures of ancient prophecy. The five grains of incense represent the perfumes prepared by Magdalen and her holy companions for the embalming of the body of Jesus. The prayer said by the celebrant when blessing the incense shows a real connection between it and the light, and teaches us the power these several sacred objects have against the spirits of evil. The celebrants and attendants go in procession from the Sacristy to the vestibule of the Church, where the fire and incense are to be blessed as the holy women and apostles seeking the sepulchre go forth from the city. The prayers in the blessings contain beautiful allusions. After the blessing some of the fire is put into the thurible, when the celebrant incenses the fire and the five grains of incense, which have first been sprinkled with holy water. A candle is lighted from the blessed fire that the new light may be brought into the Church. The ministers have been

vested in purple, but now the Deacon puts on a white dalmatic, and takes into his hand a triple branched candle resting on a rod. The rod signifies Our Lord's passion, while the three branched candle signifies the Blessed Trinity. The procession returns to the Church, and the Deacon lights at the entrance one of the candles; then kneeling, as do also the clergy and people, he sings "*Lumin Christi,*" *The Light of Christ,* and all answer *Deo Gratias, Thanks be to God.* This represents the revelation made to us by Jesus of the Divinity of the Father. Midway up the Church the deacon lights a second candle and the same ceremonies are observed. This second lighting signifies the reception of the knowledge of the Divinity of the Son. At the Altar steps the third candle is lighted and the same ceremonies observed signifying the revelation of the Divinity of the Holy Ghost.

The first use of the new fire then is to proclaim the Holy Trinity. It is next to publish the glory of the Incarnate Word by lighting its glorious symbol.

## II.—*The Paschal Candle.*

The blessing of the Paschal Candle is the principal feature of this ceremonial. The Deacon after begging the blessing of the celebrant proceeds to the Gospel side of the Altar, and from the book of the Gospels sings the beautiful prayer in which the blessing takes place, a Chant attributed with some degree of probability to the great Saint Augustin. This *Exultet* beautifully joins the two-fold object of the ceremony, for while it prays that this candle may continue burning through the night to dispel its darkness, it speaks of it as a symbol of the Fiery Pillar, which led the Israelites from Egypt, and of Christ, ever true and never failing Light. The fourth Council of Toledo says, that this ceremony is a symbol of the re-animation of the body of Jesus, and five holes made in the candle in the figure of a Cross, represent the five principal wounds inflicted on our Victim.

The Deacon is vested in white as the angel announcing the Resurrection, while the others still clad in purple, show the grief and dread of the Apostles and Disciples. St. Augustin says, "That as by women the Resurrection was made known, thus it is a lower minister of the Church announces the fact to the superior orders of the clergy in the blessing of this candle, and as it was not the Apostles but the disciples that embalmed the body, so this Deacon places the five grains of incense as an embalming in the holes which represent the wounds."

During the canticle the candle is lighted from the triple candle, signifying the instant of Our Lord's Resurrection when the divine power restored His body to life. This Paschal Candle remains lighted at the principal services until Ascension Day, showing how Christ remained with His apostles and disciples.

*III.—The Prophecies.*

The Deacon having laid aside his white dalmatic vests in purple and returns to the celebrant. Then the prophecies, twelve in number, from the Old Testament, are read. This was the final preparation of the catechumens, and by prayers after each prophecy the Church impresses the lessons expressed in the preceding prophecy. Then follows

*IV.—The Blessing of the Font.*

The procession moves to the Baptistry, acolytes carrying the Paschal Candle while two others carry the Holy Chrism and the oil of the catechumens. With many solemn prayers the water which is to be the instrument of the divine work of regeneration is blessed. The celebrant divides it in the form of a cross to signify that it is by the cross that it receives the power of regenerating the souls of men. Then he places his hand upon it as the mere contact of the consecrated hand of Pontiff or Priest, produces a salutary effect as often as they act in virtue of

the priesthood of Christ dwelling within them. He blesses it then with a triple blessing, so that the benediction of the Living, The True and the Holy God may descend upon it. Next he alludes to the four rivers watering the earthly paradise, and again dividing the water he sprinkles it towards the North, South, East and West, since the whole world receives the preaching of the baptism of Christ. Then he invokes the life-giving action of the Holy Spirit to express which the celebrant thrice breathes in the form of a cross over the water. Taking the Paschal Candle he dips the lower end of it into the font, thereby signifying the mystery of Christ's baptism in the Jordan, which sanctified the element of water. Then he breathes again upon the water in the form of the Greek letter upsilon, the initial of the Greek word for spirit. The people are then sprinkled with the blessed water, after which to signify the superabundant grace of baptism, he pours in first the oil of catechumens; then the oil of chrism, and finally both together, mixing the holy oils with the water that thus every portion of it may come into contact with this additional source of sanctification.

*V.—The Litanies.*

The procession again repairs to the Sanctuary, where the ministers having laid aside their outer vestments, lie prostrate at the foot of the Altar while the choir chants the Litanies praying for the neophytes who are this day added to the Church throughout the world. As the solemn Litany is drawing to a close, the ministers rise, proceed to the Sacristy, there put on the richest vestments symbolic of joy. As the choir has begun the closing invocation *Kyrie Eleison*, the procession comes from the Sacristy with all possible pomp and begins

VI.—*The Mass.*

During the Litanies the candles upon the Altar have been lighted and the Altar ornamented. In the Mass there is no Introit, because all have been for a long time present. The Mass proceeds as usual with the exception of the organ which is not played until the celebrant intones the *Gloria in Excelsis*. Then organ and bells peal forth the joyous tidings of the Resurrection. The purple Altar veil is removed, the statues and pictures are uncovered. After the Epistle, a sub-deacon goes to the throne, and addressing the Bishop, says, "Holy Father, I announce to you great joy, that is "*Alleluia*," when the celebrant repeats thrice the joyful "*Alleluia*" each time with an increase of gladness; all grief and sorrow is at an end, the tract bids us praise the Lord. The Deacon sings a gospel containing the first announcement of the Resurrection, but the Creed is omitted since the Church would have us bear in mind that the apostles who were to preach to the world the mystery of the Resurrection had not yet honored it by their faith. There is no Offertory since on account of the length of the services the usual offerings by the people of bread and wine for the sacrifice was omitted and consequently there was no need of a chant during that service. The kiss of peace is also omitted in this Mass because it was not until the evening of the day of His Resurrection that Jesus spoke these words to the disciples, and the church reserves them with the *Agnus Dei* for Easter. After the Communion, the office of Vespers is immediately begun, and consists of only one Psalm, followed by the *magnificat*. The Deacon turning to the people to dismiss them, adds a double *Alleluia* to the usual formula, to signify the joy of the Church at the Resurrection. The Mass concludes with the blessing of the celebrant and the Gospel of St. John.







